

VIII. QUICK UNILATERAL WITHDRAWAL

This course involves a U.S. decision (publicly announced, now or later) to withdraw all U.S. forces from SVN in one year or less, whether or not an agreement is reached in Paris.

A. Beliefs of Advocates

1. The war is unwinnable (in acceptable ways). No matter what statistics might indicate or official reporters feel, our efforts cannot resolve the political problems that are at the heart of this war. We should therefore cut our losses and avoid unknown additional risks while we can, and devote resources and energies to other activities elsewhere.
2. The Nixon Administration can successfully explain this course to the American people and other nations, particularly in its early days.
 - a. The American people will be receptive because many are disenchanted with the war, and because many believe that domestic priorities would benefit. (Public opinion has responded favorably to deescalation and has favored escalation only "to get it over with." If no acceptable "get it over with" prospect is in sight, the public is likely to favor unilateral withdrawal.)
 - b. Other nations will accept our action because we have met our commitments by large investment in men and resources, and shown "wisdom" in accepting the situation.
3. It is important to start the withdrawal process now and complete it quickly because otherwise -- with every other option -- the new administration runs a risk of getting locked in (War transferred from Johnson to Nixon Administration rather than from U.S. to SVN).
4. The only way to get the SVN to try to negotiate a settlement with the NLF or to assume the burden of fighting is by credible announcement of actual full withdrawal.
5. Withdrawal "limits damage," saves lives, conserves resources now.

B. Military Actions

1. U.S. forces are drawn down to zero on a crash basis. (According to logistic estimates, can be done in a year or less.)

2. U.S. immediately assumes posture suited for redeployment.
3. Equipment turned over to GVN (as much as they are able to use).

C. Paris

1. U.S. tries to negotiate for reciprocal NVA withdrawal, using pace and scope of American withdrawal as bargaining counters (But U.S. withdraws in any case).
2. U.S. tries to get cease-fire during withdrawal.
3. U.S. maintains a strong declaratory policy against NVN (and other Communist) aggression and reaffirms U.S. interest in Asian nations willing to help themselves.
4. U.S. Government would be attacked domestically by some for a pullout, but cannot predict depth or dimensions. Would be praised by others. U.S. declares for home consumption that success in Vietnam depended primarily on Vietnamese efforts (which have been inadequate), that it was a policy misjudgment to make it an American war, and the time has come to reverse this.

D. GVN

1. U.S. says it will continue to help present or other non-Communist forces as much as we can. Maintains a small force of technical advisers.
2. U.S. applies no pressure for reforms and is friendly to whatever GVN (or non-Communists in a coalition government) wants to do.

E. Cost

1. Fastest and surest way of reducing cost radically.
2. Fastest and surest way of reducing U.S. casualties.

F. Consequences

1. Probable collapse of GVN and Communist takeover, but possibility of non-Communist coalition government. (Even a Communist government after collapse not necessarily altogether Hanoi's "stooge.") SVN countryside quickly taken over by VC.